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**TERRORISM AND THE PURSUIT OF CONCILIATORY POLICY**

By

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## **Abstract**

This research project is an attempt to demonstrate that it is in America's best interest to support a strong and prosperous Islamic world. It utilizes a literature review of available Islamic, Western, and American perspectives concerning the cultural, economic, religious, and historic conflicts which have caused instability in the Islamic world. The following steps are proposed: withdraw American military withdrawal from Islamic holy lands, reduce world demand for oil, assist non-petroleum based economic development of Middle East, allow bad ideas to naturally fail, see growing non-petroleum based economic, political, military, and cultural strength as a source of stability and success for global and American interests.

## INTRODUCTION

American policy in the Middle East has faced numerous challenges. The events of September 11, 2001 brought to American consciousness the issues that have long-resided in the collective hearts and minds of the Islamic and Arab cultures of the Middle East. American pursuit of national interests has failed to evaluate the culture and perspectives of those that believe they suffer grave injustice at the hand of American foreign policy. The emergence of Islamic suicide bombing is just one indicator of the intensity of commitment to a cause which has been widely misunderstood by Americans.

American culture understands coercive power and uses it in various forms to achieve American interests. In the case of conflict between the West and the Islamic world, America has been reluctant to understand when, how, and why the Islamic world is applying coercive power to achieve Islamic interests. This is made evident by the fact that America has been under terrorist attack for many years but failed to connect the dots sufficiently to register the situation as an attack. In the immediate aftermath of 9-11, Americans still needed to ask, “Why?”

America has fundamentally failed to understand the strategic, social, and individual “logic” of suicide terrorism.<sup>1</sup> In *Dying to Win*, Robert Pape posits that suicide terrorism, at its core, is akin to asymmetric guerrilla tactics with definable objectives.<sup>2</sup> In fact, suicide tactics are just a component of a coherent campaign plan.<sup>3</sup>

What appears to be random, senseless, bloodthirsty, and murderous behavior must be understood quite differently in order to respond with effective policy.<sup>4</sup> Pape believes that the presence of American combat power as an occupying force in Islamic holy lands is the center of gravity (COG) for the popular support Al-Qaeda needs to conduct suicide bombing missions. Pape concludes that these forces should be withdrawn to defeat the popular support Al-Qaeda

needs to conduct suicide missions. In his afterword, Pape says, “So long as the war on terrorism ignores the actual strategic logic of suicide terrorism, it will likely be impossible to win and our actions may end up helping terrorist leaders recruit many more suicide terrorists to kill us.”<sup>5</sup>

Robert Pape’s thesis is fundamentally correct. He provides strong evidence for the necessity of making decisive change in American policy in the Middle East. However, his efforts focus on *suicide* terrorism and leave other aspects of terrorism insufficiently evaluated. For example, some terrorist demands include the call for reestablishment of the caliphate.<sup>6</sup> This is a broader, more strategic issue than deciding whether American forces should leave the Middle East. Also, Pape attempts to describe the coercive demands of terrorists as predominantly “secular.”<sup>7</sup> This error fails to recognize that Islam doesn’t intuitively distinguish between secular and religious policy. It is not likely that America will have the luxury of wrestling with a purely “secular” or purely “political” solution to tension in the Middle East.

America will reap a short-term reduction of the threat of suicide terror if Pape’s recommendations are followed. However, America should be prepared for the eventual return of further terror attacks unless the persistent and underlying sources of anger are ameliorated. The thesis of this paper is that to win the long war, America must become more aware of the history and ideology that drives terrorism, American forces must withdraw from Islamic holy lands, and American policy must attempt to encourage the prosperity of the Islamic world in order to resolve sources of anger that fuel this conflict. Broad movements of religious zeal tend to wane when tempted with affluence.

This thesis will be developed according to the following roadmap: First, terms and assumptions will be clearly defined. Then, a general overview of Islamic history will be presented. This history will be examined in terms of patterns that influence Islamic strength,

weakness, and self-perception. This will lead to the introduction of Islamic terrorist goals and the strengths and weaknesses of Robert Pape's argument. Finally, a recommendation for the necessity of conciliatory policy and some helpful policy steps will be proposed. America's willingness to win hearts and minds is not an indication of weakness. Sun Tzu might call this the "epitome of skill."

## ASSUMPTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

This paper makes numerous assumptions. The phrase **world view** refers to the set of presupposed truths that form the framework for how a culture (or individual) understands reality. The **West** refers to the European and American ideological background that adopted Judeo-Christian thought patterns in their philosophy of basic morality, liberal governments, individual rights, and balancing the rights of individuals against the requirements of the broader population. The worldview of the West has, by definition, been distinctively influenced by Christianity. However, in the twenty first century, it is inaccurate to describe America or the West as "Christian." Modern America would be more properly categorized as post-Christian.

This paper will sometimes refer to ideological differences between Islam and America. This is intended in a broad and generalized sense since the ideologies of America (or the West) and Islam cannot be precisely boiled down. Terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda (AQ) represent only a very small fraction of Muslims and this paper does not intend to convey that AQ is representative of the entirety of Islam. However, the extremes of AQ and related groups tend to dominate the ideological landscape of international relations within the War on Terror (WOT). Sometimes the perceived clout produced by the activities of AQ engender a return of



prominence. Some Muslims may appreciate this effect while remaining strongly opposed to AQ's methods.

It must be remembered that the strategic goal of revolutionary ideologues is to usher ideas from the fringe of society into the hearts and minds of the mainstream. If AQ uses religious imperatives as part of their information operation strategy, then American efforts to counter that strategy will likely be unable to completely ignore Islamic theology. It is important for the content of American policy to communicate that America's fight is against murderous criminals and NOT against peaceful Muslims.

Furthermore, it should be understood that when a conflict exists between two parties and religion (or lack thereof) is a major contributor to the conflict for only one of the parties, then the conflict is about religion for BOTH parties –whether acknowledged or not. This is especially true if the conflict involves violence.

America must understand the significance of these religious complaints and goals. America must also identify its own religious commitments. For example, the American desire for a liberated and democratic Iraq reflects strong pseudo-religious belief. This “religion” may not have an agreed upon name, like “Christianity” or “Buddhism,” but it is religious in the sense that it reveals a preexisting commitment to a specific set of guiding principles.

American behavior is best understood in a religious context reflective of a faith commitment to propositional truths. American behavior is certainly not “Christian” by the strict definition of pertaining to following the instructions of a religious figure named Jesus Christ. A better name might be “Americanism” or “Westianity.” Likewise, the beliefs and actions of Al Qaeda don't accurately reflect Islam.

Christianity focuses on belief about events concerning a historic individual, while Islam

focuses on a set of five revealed religious behaviors. To partially demonstrate the significance of religious behavior in the conflict between America and the broader Islamic world, consider what would happen if either of the following scenarios occurred:

1. American culture became universally identified (in the Islamic World) with genuine piety, selflessness, and kindness instead of the salacious debauchery exemplified by “Hollywood.”
2. America formally and earnestly declared itself to be an Islamic state and cheerfully embraced Sharia law and Islamic customs of dress and behavior.

The resulting policy changes of AQ and most Islamic governments toward the US Government would be enormous. American policy and perspective will only be helpful in as much as it reflects reality in the conflict it faces. Therefore, it is unwise to attempt to dismiss religious discussion and differences.

## **HISTORY OF ISLAM**

This section will provide evidence that Islamic history is critical to understanding today’s conflict. Unlike traditional Western thought, the Muslim mind may readily hold two contradictory ideas in tension. This is particularly important in historical analysis. Islamic history and growth from weakness to strength and back to relative weakness will be explained through the lens of Islamic self-perception.

## **THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

Islam is one of three predominant monotheistic world religions, along with Judaism and Christianity, that share common historical elements. All three religions teach the basic story that

God created mankind and personally works out the details of history according to His divine will.<sup>8</sup> However, the personal character reflected by each religion's version of God is irreconcilable.

Despite broad similarities, specific elements of their historical backgrounds differ significantly between Islam and the Judeo-Christian tradition. Christians and Jews see God's main redemptive interaction flowing from the descendents of Abraham's son, Isaac, and Isaac's son, Jacob. The Islamic tradition believes similar stories, but the main action involves descendents of Isaac's half-brother, Ishmael, instead of Isaac. This is significant because it indicates two different sets of beliefs regarding the identity of God's chosen people.

Christianity hinges upon the reality of Jewish prophecy being fulfilled by a unique prophet who was to become the personal centerpiece of all of God's interaction with humanity. Christians believe in a triune God and that the identity of this prophet was God himself. Unfortunately, Christians are not immune from acting contrary to their own belief system and have mistreated Jews and Muslims at various times and places.

Islam teaches that both Judaism and Christianity were originally true, but have since fallen prey to theological and moral corruption. According to this view, the resulting Jewish and Christian religious systems are in apostasy and lack reliable written revelation. Islam refers to pre-Islamic history as "Jahaliya," which means "time of ignorance," and refers to pre-Islamic religions – especially those of Arabian Peninsula.<sup>9</sup> In Islamic theology, God responded to the apostasy of His previous attempted religions by sending a final prophet, Muhammad, to communicate God's truth once and for all. Philosophically, this subjects Islam to an enormous logical conundrum as a religious system: If God's previous revelation was thwarted by the ignorance, failure, or foolishness of humanity, what assurance is possible that Muhammad's

revelation could be “once and for all”? The Muslim faith historically awards Christians and Jews an improved position as fellow “people of the book,” but overall, like Christianity, it has a spotted history of how it treats earlier religious views.

The essential elements of Christian thought are the nature and identity of Jesus as the son of a Triune God and Jesus’ atoning death and bodily resurrection. If evidence is produced that disproves either of these two points, Christianity should cease to exist (beyond being just a social club). The Christian doctrine of the Triune God is untenable to the Muslim mind because the concept of the Trinity is perceived as a thinly veiled form of polytheism. Polytheism describes the paganism practiced by the early inhabitants of Mecca and, along with atheism, is considered one of the worst forms of religion that Muhammad opposed after receiving Allah’s revelation.

The first of Islam’s five pillars is the “Shahada” which is the following recitation: “There is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.” The essential elements of Islam are the ontological oneness of God’s nature and submission to God’s revelation to Muhammad. This is partly why Pakistan’s Muslim (monotheistic) and India’s predominantly Hindu (polytheistic) cultures have clashed.

## **ISLAMIC HISTORY**

Muhammad was born in Mecca at approximately 570 AD. He was a member of the Quaraysh tribe which was responsible for the polytheistic pagan idols and images located at the Ka’ba in Mecca.<sup>10</sup> In 610 AD, when Muhammad was approximately 40 years old, he received his revelation from Allah. This revelation serves as the basis for the Koran. The descriptions of Muhammad’s life and sayings form the basis of a second important set of writings called the Hadith. Not surprisingly, Muhammad’s new religious convictions were immediately in conflict

with the polytheistic and pagan religions of the Ka'ba.

Although Muhammad gained several converts, many in his city, tribal group, and extended family were strongly opposed to his new religion. Conflict with inhabitants of Mecca forced Muhammad and his new followers to escape on two different occasions. They eventually settled in Medina, where Muhammad established himself as a religious, military, and political leader.<sup>11</sup> This movement is known as the Hijra and represents a historic withdrawal to attain strength and purity. Muhammad launched at least six military campaigns from Medina.<sup>12</sup>

During a speech in Mecca in 632, Muhammad said, "Know that every Muslim is a Muslim's brother, and that the Muslims are brethren; fighting between them should be avoided, and the blood shed in pagan times should not be avenged; Muslims should fight all men until they say, 'There is no god but God.'"<sup>13</sup> This is also the year that Muhammad died. The Islamic view of Jesus is that he is a great teacher. However, unlike Muhammad, he failed to produce military victories or a recognizable empire as part of his legacy.

In 641 AD, the Caliph 'Umar removed Jews and Christians from much of the Arabian peninsula in obedience to Muhammad's death-bed utterance, "Let there not be two religions in Arabia."<sup>14</sup> Muhammad established governmental unity between religion, civil authority, and the military. As author Bernard Lewis states, "During Muhammad's lifetime, the Muslims became at once a political and a religious community, with the Prophet as head of state. As such he governed a place and a people, dispensed justice, collected taxes, commanded armies, waged war and made peace."<sup>15</sup> He was a great leader and unifier who established a strong, localized Islamic empire in a remarkably short period of time. He also demonstrated continued patterns of pursuing both individual and social purity.

Muhammad's written legacy seems to indicate a transition from defining Jihad in terms

of spiritual striving to defining it in a more concrete, military sense. Muhammad's legacy produced periods of peace with an underlying propensity for conflict. Again, Bernard Lewis offers the following commentary:

Jihad was most commonly interpreted to mean armed struggle for the defense or advancement of Muslim power. In Muslim tradition, the world is divided into two houses: the House of Islam...in which Muslim governments rule and Muslim law prevails, and the House of War, the rest of the world, still inhabited and, more importantly, ruled by infidels...the presumption is that the duty of jihad will continue, interrupted only by truces, until all the world either adopts the Muslim faith or submits to Muslim rule.<sup>16</sup>

Former President George W. Bush made a concerted effort to communicate the viewpoint that Islam was a religion of peace and not violence, as clearly the vast majority of Muslims are peaceful. However, according to former Muslim Walid Shoebat, this may not be completely accurate. The Koranic interpretive principle of *abrogation* means that when two passages of the Koran appear to contradict, the latter passage takes precedence. According to Shoebat, many passages which non-Muslims use to emphasize the peaceful side of Islam have actually been abrogated in favor of passages which advocate militant policies toward non-Muslims,<sup>17</sup> This doesn't mean that Muslims don't value, obey, or prefer "peaceful" passages. Rather, it sheds light on how the violent-minded justify their bloodlust.

Muhammad's early behavior and teachings of peace reflect Islam as a source of social change and justice. In contrast to racism and infanticide, Islam was a monumental improvement. However, as Islam gained strength, coercion was gradually introduced to ensure success and growth of Islam. This transition toward more militant behavior generally coincides with the growing size and ambition of the early Islamic empire.

Muhammad's first Jihad against the citizens of Mecca was victorious. The leaders of Mecca gave up without a fight.<sup>18</sup> According to Bernard Lewis, "The next task was the extension

of Muslim authority to the rest of Arabia and, under the Prophet's successors, the caliphs, to the rest of the world.”<sup>19</sup>

## **CALIPHATE**

The word caliph comes from the Arabic title khalifa adopted by Muhammad's father-in-law and successor, Abu Bakr. The controversy about who was the rightful successor to Muhammad has served as a source of conflict between the two main Islamic sects of Shi'a and Sunni. The spread of Islam may be seen in respect to the Islamic Caliphates:

**Al –Rashidun (632-661 AD)** – This group of early caliphs are called the “Rightly Guided” and are esteemed by all Muslims. They are the first four caliphs: Abu Bakr to Ali.<sup>20</sup>

**Umayyad (661-750 AD)**- After the “Rightly Guided” caliphs, the passage of authority followed hereditary lines and suffered a possible corresponding loss of legitimacy.<sup>21</sup> The capital was moved to Damascus. During this period Imam Hussein ibn Ali was killed.

**Abbasids (750-1258 AD)** -This was a remarkable period in Islamic history. This period encompassed a “flowering of medicine, the sciences, art, literature, and architecture. It was relatively liberal in its treatment of Jewish, Christian, and other minorities and was, in its time, the world's most advanced civilization.”<sup>22</sup> 1258 AD Marked the Mongol invasion and destruction of Baghdad (the capital) and the transition of Islamic power to the Mameluke dynasty in Egypt.<sup>23</sup>

**Fatimid (909-1171 AD)**- A Shiite dynasty which claimed descent from Muhammad's daughter, Fatima, and from Hussein, the son of Ali. In 969 AD, the Fatimids founded the city called al-Qahirah, which today is called Cairo.<sup>24</sup> The Fatimid represented a defection

from the rule from Baghdad.<sup>25</sup>

**Saljuqs (1037-1194 AD)**- They established a large empire and “provoked” the first crusade.<sup>26</sup>

**Mameluks (1250-1517 AD)**- They took power in Egypt from the descendants of Saladin. The Mameluks saved Islam from the onslaught of the Mongol invasion.<sup>27</sup>

**Ottomans (1299-1923 AD)** – This was a powerful and expansive empire. However, it did not advance culturally in technical or scientific knowledge.<sup>28</sup>

Islam has produced impressive civilizations and is responsible for introducing great cultural advances. Islam was “coterminous with civilization, and beyond its borders there were only barbarians and infidels.”<sup>29</sup> Muslims view themselves as the culmination of God’s interaction on the earth. The Christian empire of Byzantium seemed to wane during Islam’s meteoric expansion, which seemed to match their self-perception that Allah was blessing them and they had “divinely guided power.”<sup>30</sup> Islam produced scientific, medical, and mathematical advances. They established an enormous empire, conducted mighty defeats upon the European, Middle Eastern, African, India, China, and Russian civilizations and might have attained much more if it were not for the internal struggles between the Turks and Persians.<sup>31</sup>

A possible conclusion may be noted from this period. Islamic history contains examples of relative peace and accommodation of both Jews and Christians. These periods seem to coincide with periods of relative Islamic strength.

There were centuries of victorious Islamic advances. Christian empires were incapable of strong resistance. The Christian forces countered Muslim expansion by conducting the Crusades which ultimately failed to hold their intended objectives but did result in long-term mistrust. Constantinople eventually fell in 1453 AD to the Muslim Ottoman Empire.<sup>32</sup> To their



misfortune, Islam failed to note the advances of the “infidel” Christian kingdoms.

## **THE WEST AS SLEEPING GIANT**

Albert Hourani provides a hint of the effect of failing to notice the changes occurring with the West by noting some change dynamics of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century:

In the last quarter of the century, however, the situation began to change rapidly and dramatically, as the gap between the technical skills of some western and northern European countries and those of the rest of the world grew wider. During the centuries of Ottoman rule there had been no advance in technology and a decline in the level of scientific knowledge and understanding. Apart from a few Greeks and others educated in Italy, there was little knowledge of the languages of western Europe or of the scientific and technical advances being made there. The astronomical theories associated with the name Copernicus were mentioned for the first time, and even then only briefly, in Turkish at the end of the seventeenth century, and the advances in European medicine were only slowly coming to be known in the eighteenth.<sup>33</sup>

The West slowly gained speed. Western military skills and weaponry were noted in early Crusade victories in the Levant.<sup>34</sup> Western advances in ship building, defeat of the Moors in Spain (1492), Turkish naval defeat at the Battle of Lepanto (1571), and the defense of Vienna (1683) all indicated the growing strength of the West.<sup>35</sup> In reference to Napoleon’s capture of Egypt, Bernard Lewis states, “The lesson was harsh and clear – even a small European force could invade one of the heartlands of the Islamic empire and do so with impunity. The second lesson came a few years later, when the French were forced to leave--not by the Egyptians nor by their Turkish suzerains, but by ...Horatio Nelson.”<sup>36</sup>

## **COLONIALISM AND OTHER “SINS” OF THE WEST**

During much of this period, Christianity existed under a “Constantine” model which confounds the modern understanding of the separation of church and state. This manifests itself in three problematic ways:

1. The ecclesiastical church wielded the power of the sword.
2. The various political states were given the moniker, “Christian.”
3. The Christian state’s power and the church’s power intermingled.

Although Christianity doesn’t continue to function under this model, it is noteworthy that this system was a significant part of its history. Islam has also demonstrated this pattern.

Kemal Ataturk of Turkey was an example of a Muslim attempt to separate civil governance from religious authority. It resulted in relative success for the country of Turkey.<sup>37</sup> Although he was adored by Turks, and generally appreciated by much of the West, more extreme Muslims believe his policies to be a catastrophe. It would have caused similar uproar had a Christian ruler of the middle ages declared his “Christian” kingdom to be secular. Additionally, as leader of the Ottoman empire, Ataturk’s decision effectively abolished the Caliphate. The occurrence of this Western-influenced “sin” of transitioning toward secularism induced Osama bin Laden to include this event as a date of infamy.<sup>38</sup>

Muslim views of Christianity have been shaped by the actions of Christians through history. For example, the Crusades remain a source of cultural bitterness. More recently, European colonialism has been portrayed as an attempt of the “Christian” West to dominate Islamic lands. This contributes a defensive component to the Islamic struggle for their faith, known as Jihad.

The West is reluctant to appreciate the negative perception that “colonialism” has generated in the minds of the affected cultures. Qaddafi stated to a Washington Post reporter, “[Abu Nidal] has the right to fight and liberate his country...this so called terrorism...is not terrorism, it is a matter of [combating] colonization.”<sup>39</sup> In the mind of Libyan Muslims, Italy dominated Libya and the “...Italians executed more than twenty-four thousand Cyrenaicans,

herded most of the civilian population into concentration camps, and forced the remaining population to flee to the desert.”<sup>40</sup>

Success, cultural growth, and Islamic expansion aren't the only factors which form Islamic self-perception. Internal religious history also plays a vital role. Iranians fighting Iraqis in the Iran-Iraq War saw their struggle and personal sacrifice as reflecting solidarity with the martyrdom of one of their most precious religio-cultural icons: Imam Hussein. Imam Hussein was the son of the Caliph Ali and those who followed this sect are referred to as the “party of Ali” or Shi’ia.<sup>41</sup> The Shi’ia strongly revere Imam Hussein. The anniversary of his martyrdom by the Umayyads at the Battle of Karbala is one of the most important Shi’ia days of the year.<sup>42</sup> Today, pilgrims travel to Karbala in modern day Iraq and commemorate this event.<sup>43</sup>

The sting of offense lingers in high context cultures found in the Arab world. A catalog of offenses can build, cross-national boundaries, and even transcend centuries. For example, Al Qaeda documents from May 2003 explain AQ’s attacks on the Saudi Regime with language that clearly indicates one main enemy but a remarkable number of accomplices:

The Muslim countries today are colonized. Colonialism is either direct or veiled...masking colonialism...is exactly what happened in Afghanistan when the United States occupied that country and installed an Afghan agent, Hamid Karzai....There is no difference between the Karzai of Yemen, the Karzai of Pakistan, the Karzai of Jordan, the Karzai of Qatar, the Karzai of Kuwait, the Karzai of Egypt, and the long list of Karzai traitors ruling the Muslim countries.<sup>44</sup>

Islamic reverence for cultural icons, the experience of abuses of the crusades, domination by the “infidel” European colonial powers, the contemptuous 1924 abolishment of the caliphate, inflammatory pictures of Abu Ghraib prisoners, the steeply waning Islamic affluence and influence provokes the painful question for Islam of “What went wrong?”<sup>45</sup> For some, it invokes a tremendous and scandalous sense of loss. The relatively recent factor of globalization is

viewed as further indication of the West's domination over and humiliation of the Islamic world.<sup>46</sup> Some view violence as a, "way to cure Muslim youth of the pernicious effects of centuries of humiliation at the hands of the West."<sup>47</sup>

## TRUTH AND SELF-PERCEPTION

Fundamental differences in world view reflect Muslim (or Arab) thought patterns that may allow two ideas, which appear contradictory, to both be held as true. For example, the Associate Press reported the following:

"GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — More than 5,000 Hamas supporters rallied in Gaza on Friday, as a leader of the Islamic militant group emerged from hiding to declare victory in the 23-day Israeli offensive that devastated much of the Palestinian territory..."We thank God when we see our houses bombed and our institutions destroyed, but our people say yes to the resistance and yes to martyrdom for the sake of God," al-Hayeh said, standing in front of the damaged Palestinian parliament building. **"We say proudly that Gaza has won the war, the resistance has won the war, and Hamas has won the war."**<sup>48</sup>

This article describes utter loss and destruction with evidence such as 1,300 Palestinians killed compared to 13 Israelis.<sup>49</sup> Palestinian measurement of success differs radically from those that naturally occur to the Western mind. The Palestinians were crushed militarily and yet declared victory because Israel allowed some to survive. Similarly, Saddam Hussein used Operation DESERT STORM coalition's political decision NOT to remove Hussein as proof of his victory.<sup>50</sup> There is clearly a radical difference in the cultural necessity to connect conclusions into a single, non-contradictory pattern.

Another interesting example of a radically different view of victory is eviction of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. There is very little argument that the Mujahedeen were the ultimate victors. However, it is interesting to note that Bin Laden believes that they not only forced the Soviet Union out, but that the Mujahedeen were the cause of the subsequent *COLLAPSE* of the

Soviet Union. A RAND study reports, “Muslims from Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Southeast Asia, and beyond fought side by side, forging relationships and creating a cadre of veterans who shared a powerful life experience, a more global view, and a heady sense of confidence underscored by the Soviet Union’s ultimate withdrawal and subsequent collapse, for which they assumed credit.”<sup>51</sup> In an article in the Asia Times, Walid Phares states, “... Al-Qaeda's strategic doctrine is based on the perception that the jihadis have defeated the Soviet Union, thus they can crush the United States and its allies.”<sup>52</sup>

Thus, several cultural patterns emerge from Islamic history:

1. Islamic self-perception of cultural significance remains frozen to bygone periods.
2. Muslim suffer discomfort over loss of cultural prestige. They desire the return of that prestige.
3. Muslims are committed to the religious superiority of Islam and the caliphate.
4. Muhammad pursued expansion according to the following pattern: first awaken spiritually, then retreat to purify, and finally march toward expansion.

## **TERRORISM**

### **ANALYSIS OF DYING TO WIN**

Robert Pape’s *Dying to Win* posits that U.S. policy could potentially strike a serious blow to the suicide terrorist Center of Gravity (COG) by the withdrawal of US military forces from Islamic holy lands and the maintenance of stability in the region through off-shore balancing. This approach would placate a significant source of visceral anger which motivates many suicide attack recruitment campaigns and therefore assist in reducing popular support and the numbers of suicide volunteers.

Robert Pape's *Dying to Win* presents a significant argument for the rationality and logic of the suicide bomber. His analysis canvases all Islamic and non-Islamic suicide terrorism. Pape's fundamental analysis of the goals of Islamic suicide terrorism is accurate. Pape's research strongly indicates that the most significant step to "win hearts and minds," or to prevent AQ from winning hearts and minds, starts with removing American forces from Islamic holy lands. The following is a brief summary:

1. Political coercion is the aim of the strategic logic of suicide terrorism.<sup>53</sup> Suicide terrorism is pragmatic: in 4 of 5 world conflicts involving suicide terrorism, suicide terrorism advanced the suicide terrorist's goal of political coercion.<sup>54</sup> Religious fanaticism was not the root cause.
2. "...Suicide terrorism... is mainly a response to foreign occupation."<sup>55</sup>
3. "Understanding the logic of suicide terrorism can help us pursue the right domestic and foreign policies to contain this deadly threat."<sup>56</sup> Pape's research reveals suicide terror is not an illogical or irrational act. Rather, it is a tactic with very specific political goals in mind.

Therefore, reading the statements of Osama Bin Laden and his associates could actually reveal critical insight to their motivation. America seems too quick to believe that the "rantings" of AQ are nonsense and incapable of revealing coherent thought. This mistake will continue to cripple the ability of West to appropriately respond to AQ.

Interviews with planners and failed suicide bombers clearly reveal that they were not committing suicide.<sup>57</sup> Rather, they were committing "brave" acts of combat within a philosophical system that blurs the distinction between combatants and non-combatants. Americans don't view soldiers who save friends by falling on live grenades as committing

suicide. Instead, they call them heroes. In much of the Muslim world, they are called Martyrs and are thus revered and emulated. This creates a horrifying dilemma: How do you deter a foe who wants to die?

The weakness of Pape's argument is that he applies a western framework for the distinction of secular and sacred upon the goals of al-Qaeda. This error does not diminish his conclusions about what drives the "operational" level of suicide terror; however, it does prevent Pape from seeing al-Qaeda in its proper long-term strategic context of the next "... few centuries...."<sup>58</sup> This long-term perspective is part of AQ's ideology. Furthermore, Pape's description focuses too much as a response to a specific American policy rather than seeing an attack on America as a means to more extreme and strategic Islamic ends.<sup>59</sup>

### **AL-QAEDA AND THE GLOBAL CALIPHATE**

According to Trevor Stanley's article, "The Evolution of Al-Qaeda: Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," the Al-Qaeda model is traced back to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb's 1962 book, *Milestones*.<sup>60</sup> Stanley summarizes Qutb with the following steps which recapitulate early Islamic history:

1. Awaken to the truth of Islam.
2. Separation (or Hijra) from the Infidels and sinful societies.
3. Authentic Islamic society can only be established after Hijra.

In actual history, this is the flow of Muhammad's early conquests. AQ leadership sees the destruction of America as the precursor to revolution in Muslim countries. Stanley's description of Afghanistan reflects Qutb's pattern:

The Afghan-Arab mujahideen believed that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Afghan communist regime resulted from their correct implementation of Qutb's Koranic blueprint. The al-Qaeda paradigm therefore bases the 'milestones' of its theory of revolution on the sequence of events in Afghanistan:

**1978** Communist revolution in Afghanistan establishes an infidel regime that is a proxy of the Soviet Superpower. An Islamic Awakening takes place.

**1979** The regime fails to control the uprising, and the superpower is forced to invade and take direct control.

**1980s** The Afghan-Arab Hijra. By migrating to Afghanistan, Arab fundamentalists were able to establish enclaves beyond the reach of both their own apostate governments and the Soviets. These enclaves are bases from which 'raids' on the Soviets and home regimes can be launched.

**1988** The superpower withdraws from Afghanistan, defeated.

**1991** The superpower (USSR) collapses

**1992** The Afghanistan communist regime falls

**1994** The Taliban Islamic regime appears.<sup>61</sup>

Qutb expands the definitions of takfir (apostates) and Jahiliyah (pre-Islamic times of ignorance) and begins to apply these terms toward other Muslims who disagree with him or represent moderation.<sup>62</sup> Qutb is a significant influence upon both Osama Bin Laden and Ayman Al-Zawahiri.<sup>63</sup> In fact, Zawahiri referred to Qutb as, "...the most prominent theoretician of the fundamentalist movements."<sup>64</sup> Although Qutb was executed by Egyptian president Nasser in 1966, his legacy is continued by his brother, Muhammad Qutb, as one of Bin Laden's advisors.<sup>65</sup>

The influence of Qutb is clearly seen in the following summary of Al Qaeda's five main goals. Author Paul Rogers summarizes, "Beyond the five main aims – eviction of crusader forces, termination of the House of Saud, replacement of other regimes, support for Palestine and for separatist movements elsewhere, the Al-Qaeda movement has the much broader aim of the reestablishment of some form of Islamic caliphate."<sup>66</sup> Purity of the land, Islamic governance, separation, and ultimately, the caliphate are precisely modeled after the influence of Sayyid Qutb's writings and are supported by the historical pattern of Muhammad.

The following quote reflects the Qutb perspective. It appeared in Al-Qaeda documents admitted as evidence in the 2001 trial of Al-Qaeda terrorists for their role in the US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. It reads, "I present this humble effort to these young Moslem



men who are pure, believing, and fighting for the cause of Allah. It is my contribution toward paving the road that leads to majestic Allah and establishes a caliphate according to the prophecy.”<sup>67</sup>

## **EXPANDED INSURGENCY**

It is common to hear Americans speak of insurgency and counter-insurgency since Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in 2003. However, the REAL insurgency is not Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) against the American or fledgling Iraqi government. Iraq is just one battle in AQ’s true insurgency against the hegemonic power and influence of America. As the latest superpower, America has come to be perceived as the center of all the debauchery and abuse of power that a portion of the Islamic world associates with the West. Back in 1951, a book entitled “Islam and the Global Peace” predicted that Islam would eventually be engaged in a global war with the United States.<sup>68</sup> The author of this book was Sayid Qutb.

## **CONCILIATORY POLICY**

In light of this insurgency in Iraq and across the globe, American foreign policy in the Middle East must tread carefully. Just as American planners and strategists would vigorously study and assess the writings of Russian and communist ideology during the cold war, Americans need to become experts in the tracts which fuel Islamic terrorist ideology with an emphasis on the writings of Sayid Qutb.<sup>69</sup>

Qutb is a major influence on terror organization ideology. American planners and policy makers must recognize the essential truth that American interests should include more than solely conducting counterinsurgency (COIN) in Iraq or Afghanistan. Qutb’s followers are ultimately attempting to eliminate American hegemony and replace it with one of their own. In order to combat this movement Qutb must be read and understood.

“MND-B [Multi-National Division Baghdad] identified ‘fence-sitters’ as the operational center of gravity (COG) for both the Coalition and the insurgents.”<sup>70</sup> This refers to the narrow theater of Baghdad or the entire nation of Iraq. Broadly speaking, fence-sitters are the members of the broader Islamic community or “Ummah.” They are not just the COG for MND-B but also the Strategic COG for followers of Qutb’s long war of insurgency against American (and Western) hegemony.

If America can succeed in promoting sufficient cultural and economic development, “fence-sitters” will eventually resist influences of extremism and will prefer the stability of moderate pragmatism. The following factors are essential elements of promoting cultural and economic development: anger must be reduced, opportunities and optimism increased, self-perception of cultural significance expanded, and non-petroleum based economic interdependence achieved. Improvements in these areas will cause “fence-sitters” to become moored as sources of resistance against extremism. Muslim families will grow to appreciate stability, hope, self-esteem, civility, food, and safety more than they desire the uncertainty and danger of extremism. This process is clearly easier said than done.

The reason that Pape’s research is critical is that it demonstrates that American presence must be altered in order to reduce perceived injustice. During the Communist revolution in China, Mao used the following rules and remarks for his Communist Eighth Route Army:<sup>71</sup>

Rules

1. All actions are subject to command.
2. Do not steal from the people.
3. Be neither selfish nor unjust.

Remarks

1. Replace the door when you leave the house.
2. Roll up the bedding on which you have slept.
3. Be courteous.
4. Be honest in your transactions.
5. Return what you borrow.

6. Replace what you break.
7. Do not bathe in the presence of women.
8. Do not without authority search those you arrest.

Mao's approach clearly identifies an obvious point: You cannot win hearts and minds by systematically alienating the population you desire to influence. This is also supported by David Galula's four laws of counterinsurgency. The following is a summary of Gulula by Brett Reeder:<sup>72</sup>

1. The first law is that the population is paramount. That is, the support of the people is the primary objective of a counterinsurgency campaign. Without the support of the population, it is impossible to root out all the insurgents and stop further recruitment.
2. Such support is most readily obtained from an active minority. Those willing to actively support a counterinsurgency operation should be supported in their efforts to rally the relatively neutral majority and neutralize the hostile minority.
3. Having attained the support of the population it is imperative to remember that this support is conditional. What you do matters, and support can be lost if your actions are unfavorable to the population.
4. The fourth and final law of counterinsurgency regards the "intensity of effort and vastness of means." Because counterinsurgency requires a large concentration of effort, resources, and personnel, it is unlikely that it can be pursued effectively everywhere at once. Rather, action should be taken in select areas, and resources moved as needed. Thus, according to the laws of counterinsurgency, it is important to continuously make efforts at gaining and maintaining the support of the populace in distinct areas by leveraging an active minority.

## **PROPOSAL**

The following roadmap spells out a comprehensive American policy approach to the Middle East region which will reduce terrorism and enhance both stability and security.

**Step 1** – Withdraw American forces from Islamic holy lands as soon as possible. This step will reduce a major source of discontent, disrespect, and discord from among the terrorists. More importantly, it will reduce the sense of humiliation and shame that some "fence sitters" have been taught to feel due to the presence of Western democratic military forces in Islamic Holy Lands, particularly Saudi Arabia. Extremists will attempt to exploit other "offenses" but will not be able to incite popular support for suicide terrorism. The 9-11 terrorists were educated

and had access to economic viability and security.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, policies that ONLY reduce destabilizing economic or infrastructure issues are woefully insufficient if they don't influence visceral sources of anger and positively influence Islamic self-perception issues. In the current condition of the Iraqi government, the timing of this step must be carefully considered. What is clear is that once Iraq can fend for itself, Americans MUST make a clean, overt, and unequivocal exit.

**Step 2** – Lead and encourage the adoption of environmental initiatives to reduce and eventually eliminate US and international dependence on Middle Eastern oil products. The US will never entirely eliminate its need for oil. It must eliminate claims of Middle East involvement merely to acquire cheap oil. This will reduce the ability of hostile governments from imposing undue economic influence upon America.<sup>74</sup> If successful, this could negatively impact economies based too exclusively on oil.

**Step 3** – Creatively wean oil producing states gracefully away from reliance on oil. Even if America can succeed in slashing its dependence on foreign oil, many nations would still provide some oil revenues. Establishing non-petroleum based industrial production and economic viability would be critical for long-term economic vitality in the Middle East. Oil will either run out or cease to occupy its current level of significance due to environmental concerns. Preemptive transition will assist in stabilizing these nations when the coming oil industry slow-down occurs. In describing Saudi oil wealth, author David Lamb comments, "They knew that they had gained their triumph and won their wealth without striving. No sweat had been shed in conquering their land. Their skin was smooth and their hands bore no calluses....no one has learned how to turn the nuts or tighten the screws, and there will come a day when everyone can no longer be an executive."<sup>75</sup>

Step 3 is critical for five reasons. First, it is “destructive” to the “soul” of a person or community when they subsist upon that which they did not labor to achieve. Second, it will reduce the likelihood that these nations will become “weak and failing states.” Third, producing non-petroleum globally valued goods and services will encourage interdependence with other nations and cultures without allowing for the “strangle hold” that petroleum sometimes provides. Fourth, it encourages positive self-perception. Fifth, producing quality products produces economic vitality and enhances legitimacy of stability as indicated by the following quote from Fatema Mernissi:

If Mr. Powell, like Saladin, had encouraged reciprocity in business ventures for winners [Americans] and losers [Arabs], he would have condemned terrorist propagandists to absurdly unconvincing pantomimes on a planet where prosperity was evenly distributed. Promoting Arab youth as knowledge workers in information technology would have contributed to the prosperity of both America and the Middle east, first by creating needed jobs and second by creating consumers of goods and services.”<sup>76</sup>

**Step 4** – Allow Islamic philosophical ideas to run their natural course and allow Islamic belief to mature. For example: A culture which encourages the subjugation of women effectively removes 50% of their cultural strength. A culture which doesn’t encourage ethnic or religious minorities to contribute toward success is not maximizing success. A culture which chooses to remain tribal will struggle with unity of action.

**Step 5** - Islamic unity and strength is a good thing for American hegemony. As the Islamic world grows in strength and respect in the eyes of the world community, they will be further influenced to reject terror tactics. As their societies mature their militaries will develop in order to provide robust defense. They will need to rely more on larger conventional forces rather than considering acts of terrorism. In the regrettable case of future conflict, a strong fielded force may present a greater chance of stable, non-violent outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

American policy must address the underlying source of Islamic anger. Rather than believing that conciliatory policies represent weakness, they must be seen for what they are: a sign of strength. The policies presented here represent a plan to build strength and stability. They reduce the ability of those who oppose American efforts to provide evidence that America solely seeks to dominate the region. Liberal and democratically leaning Islamic governments will be free to prosper. Authoritarian and restrictive countries without will be encouraged to abandon faith in oil and work to produce for their culture, security, and self-perception. This alone will not prove sufficient if American troops remain stationed in Islamic holy lands. American troops need to withdraw so the Islamic world can build stability apart from anger and oil.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win*, 22.
- <sup>2</sup> Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win*, 21.
- <sup>3</sup> Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win*, 39.
- <sup>4</sup> Paul Rogers, *Why We're Losing the War on Terror*, 123.
- <sup>5</sup> Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win*, 261.
- <sup>6</sup> *The Al-Qaeda Documents Vol 1*, 18.
- <sup>7</sup> Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win*, 38.
- <sup>8</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 20.
- <sup>9</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, 79.
- <sup>10</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 15.
- <sup>11</sup> Arab Culture and Viewpoint, Timeline Handout.
- <sup>12</sup> Arab Culture and Viewpoint, Timeline Handout.
- <sup>13</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 19.
- <sup>14</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, xxix.
- <sup>15</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, 6.
- <sup>16</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, 31.
- <sup>17</sup> Islam: What the West Needs to Know
- <sup>18</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, 34.
- <sup>19</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, 34.
- <sup>20</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 25.
- <sup>21</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 26.
- <sup>22</sup> Paul Rogers, *Why We're Losing the War on Terror*, 127.
- <sup>23</sup> Thomas Lippman, *Understanding Islam*. 129.
- <sup>24</sup> Thomas Lippman, *Understanding Islam*. 125.
- <sup>25</sup> Thomas Lippman, *Understanding Islam*. 125.
- <sup>26</sup> Thomas Lippman, *Understanding Islam*. 126.
- <sup>27</sup> Thomas Lippman, *Understanding Islam*. 129.
- <sup>28</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 259.
- <sup>29</sup> Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?* 3.
- <sup>30</sup> Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?* 4.
- <sup>31</sup> Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?* 9.
- <sup>32</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, 35.
- <sup>33</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 259.
- <sup>34</sup> Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?* 4.
- <sup>35</sup> Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?* 4, 8, 11, 16.
- <sup>36</sup> Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?* 31.
- <sup>37</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 319.
- <sup>38</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, xvi.
- <sup>39</sup> Joseph T. Stanik, *El Dorado Canyon*. 228.
- <sup>40</sup> Joseph T. Stanik, *El Dorado Canyon*. 8.

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- <sup>41</sup> Thomas W. Lippman, *Understanding Islam*, 122.
- <sup>42</sup> Thomas W. Lippman, *Understanding Islam*, 122.
- <sup>43</sup> *Pilgrimage to Karbala*
- <sup>44</sup> Robert Pape, *Dying to Win*, 118.
- <sup>45</sup> Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?* 3.
- <sup>46</sup> Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, 285.
- <sup>47</sup> Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, 285.
- <sup>48</sup> Ben Hubbard, " Hamas Official Declare Victory in Gaza Rallies" Associated Press, 30 Jan 2009.
- <sup>49</sup> Ben Hubbard, " Hamas Official Declare Victory in Gaza Rallies" Associated Press, 30 Jan 2009.
- <sup>50</sup> Michael Gordon, Bernard Trainor, *COBRA II*, 59.
- <sup>51</sup> Brian M. Jenkins, *Countering Al-Qaeda*, RAND MR 1620. RAND 2002, 3.
- <sup>52</sup> Walid Phares, "Gaza Just One of Many Jihadi Fronts." *Asia Times Online*, 29 January 2009.
- <sup>53</sup> Robert Pape, *Dying to Win*, 21.
- <sup>54</sup> Robert Pape, *Dying to Win*, 22.
- <sup>55</sup> Robert Pape, *Dying to Win*, 23.
- <sup>56</sup> Robert Pape, *Dying to Win*, 24.
- <sup>57</sup> Robert Baer, *Inside the Mind of the Suicide Bomber*.
- <sup>58</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*. <http://majalla.org/books/2005/qutb-nilestone.pdf>
- <sup>59</sup> Trevor Stanley, "The Evolution of Al-Qaeda: Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Review*, April 2005.
- <sup>60</sup> Trevor Stanley, "The Evolution of Al-Qaeda: Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Review*, April 2005.
- <sup>61</sup> Trevor Stanley, "The Evolution of Al-Qaeda: Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Review*, April 2005.
- <sup>62</sup> LCDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, *Sheikh Abdel-Fatah Al-Khalidi Revitalizes Sayid Qutb*, 2
- <sup>63</sup> LCDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, *Sheikh Abdel-Fatah Al-Khalidi Revitalizes Sayid Qutb*, 2
- <sup>64</sup> Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, 264.
- <sup>65</sup> LCDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, *Sheikh Abdel-Fatah Al-Khalidi Revitalizes Sayid Qutb*, 2.
- <sup>66</sup> Rogers, *Why We're Losing the War on Terror*, 127.
- <sup>67</sup> Jerrold M. Post, *The Al-Qaeda Training Manual*, 18.
- <sup>68</sup> LCDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, *Sheikh Abdel-Fatah Al-Khalidi Revitalizes Sayid Qutb*, 4.
- <sup>69</sup> LCDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, *Sheikh Abdel-Fatah Al-Khalidi Revitalizes Sayid Qutb*, 11.
- <sup>70</sup> John Blackwell, *Rebuilding Baghdad*. 248.
- <sup>71</sup> John Nagle, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife*. 22.
- <sup>72</sup> Brett Reeder, *Book Summary of Counterinsurgency Warfare*. 1.
- <sup>73</sup> Vincent Burns and Kate Peterson, *Terrorism*. 118.
- <sup>74</sup> David Lamb, *The Arabs Journey Beyond the Mirage*. 271.
- <sup>75</sup> David Lamb, *The Arabs Journey Beyond the Mirage*. 271.
- <sup>76</sup> Fatema Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy*. XV.



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